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"I hold proof that you are a forger."—p. 581.

UNDER FOOT.

BY ALTON CLYDE, AUTHOR OF "MAGGIE LYNNE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.—AT HOME.

IT was late when Hugh Crawton reached home, for he had wandered aimlessly through the streets, and lingered on his way because he shrank from taking his sore heart and haggard face into his mother's presence, and wounding her gentle spirit with the miserable story of his expulsion and disgrace. It was not the mere fact of being thrown out of employment—not that he feared to live over again

his past experience, bitter as it was, and go back to poverty, the daily fret and harass of disappointment in the hard struggle of those who seek in vain for leave to toil; he was willing to face all that, for it was something that he could fight through and hope to conquer by the help of cheerful courage and faith in himself. But the present crush had fallen like a blight on his young head; to feel himself cast off with a brand upon his character, a mark for the finger of suspicion to point at, with the additional stigma of base ingratitude to the friend who had pushed his fortunes, the friend of all others whom he held in deepest reverence and respect. "Perjury, fraud, theft!" The words seemed to have burned into his brain, and the scene in the office returned to him until he grew heart-sick with despair. What could he do to turn the tide which had so suddenly overwhelmed him? How could he break the subtle chain of condemning evidence which some unknown enemy had forged for his undoing?

He was almost choking with these thoughts when he groped his way up the steps to his mother's door, and pushing silently past Chriss, who as usual had answered his ring, like one seized with sudden faintness, reeled rather than walked into the little parlour where his mother sat alone waiting for him; for the ill news had preceded him: thanks to Mark Danson's officious solicitude, the miserable story was not left for Hugh to tell.

"Very painful and mysterious, never occurred before to a Crawton, and of all people poor Hugh seemed the most unlikely to fall under suspicion; but we hope he will soon be cleared. The anger of the governor is something dreadful; but Hugh is safe, for it will be kept from the knowledge of the clerks if possible. I should not have known all myself if I had not drawn it from the old man, and I thought it best for Hugh's sake to prepare you."

These were Mark's words when he had done his evil errand, and let the blow fall on the aching hearts which he left behind. Margaret Crawton had reared her stately head, and turned upon him as though he had been Hugh's accuser, flashing her great eyes in that characteristic manner of hers which he particularly disliked.

"Nothing will make me believe that it is not a base conspiracy from beginning to end; my brother has some secret enemy, too cunning, and perhaps too powerful, to be easily found out. It must be left to time, and the great Judge of all men."

Even Mr. Crawton had risen above himself, and found voice to speak out for his son, completely roused for the time from the absorption of his own sick fancies. With a manner that gave new dignity to his tall, shadowy figure, he stood up from the sofa, pulling excitedly at his dressing-gown as he spoke.

"Mark Danson, how dare you come here with that tale against my son? I would have torn out my tongue before I let myself speak such words of any

kin of mine. Who is it that accuses him—Daniel Crawton? Let me go to him. Margaret, bring me my coat; we have not met for years, but I must give him back the libel to his face, and make him remember that, though we are poor, we are still as proud and honourable as any of the race."

Here followed a violent fit of coughing, which made the last words nearly inarticulate, and the poor invalid sank back on his sofa, faint and gasping for breath.

In the midst of that scene Mark Danson contrived to make his escape, secretly regretting that he had elected himself the bearer of the evil tidings, for his Cousin Margaret's words had a strange trick of recurring to him, and his dreams that night were haunted by the white, sorrow-stricken face of Hugh's mother.

"My boy—my boy!" These were the first words that greeted Hugh when he stepped across the threshold of the quiet little room, where his coming had been watched for with such anxious yearning to share the burden of misery which had so unexpectedly fallen on him. Margaret was in the next room attending her father, who was still ill from the agitation into which he had been thrown by Mark Danson's visit.

It comforted Hugh to find his mother alone. He could come to her with his bruised spirit and lay bare the wound, just as in the bygone days he had been used to bring to her the burden of his childish griefs. He was struck by something in the tone of her voice, and there was a look in her eyes that showed foreknowledge, how obtained he did not care to ask. All he craved was to cast himself on the loving sympathy which had never yet failed him in the time of need.

She met him as he came in, and taking his hot hands into her soft clasp led him like a child. He sank wearily into the seat placed for him; then the long pent-up flood of feeling broke forth, and the spirit which had sustained him in his uncle's presence gave way.

"Oh, mother!" he cried, in a tone whose sharp ring of anguish pierced her heart, "you have enough to bear without this new trouble; I read in your face that you know something of what has passed to-day. Why don't you meet me with reproaches for adding to the burden which was heavy enough before?"

In reply, she parted the brown ripples on his forehead, and soothed him in her own gentle way; but he went on excitedly, catching his breath at intervals in a sort of sob—

"Perhaps you do not yet know the worst: that I am disgraced, expelled from my situation, as one who has forfeited his right to the company of honest men. Do you realise it, mother? There is something wrong with the books, and I am suspected of embezzling two hundred pounds; but that is not all: there was a twenty-pound note missing, and it was

found in a letter, in what appeared to be my handwriting, addressed to a betting firm. I could not clear myself, and he, my uncle, believes it all; it is only the name of Crawton that has saved me from a prison. This—this, after trying so hard to do my duty! Mother, what will keep me from going mad?"

She answered with solemn sweetness—words that soothed as they fell, like oil cast on the troubled waters. "There is One who hath regard even for the fall of a sparrow, a Father who will not suffer any of his children to be tried beyond their strength. Take this trouble to His footstool, Hugh, and trust where you cannot trace His hand; for 'God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain.'

Hugh did not answer, but sat with bowed head, trying to keep his face hidden, that its expression of misery might not be seen by the kind eyes which he felt were watching him with such a world of tender anxiety in their wistful gaze.

"Take courage, Hugh; you need not fear so long as your own conscience acquits you of wrong-doing."

"But the disgrace, mother. How can I hold up my head under this suspicion? They will not take my word against the bewildering mass of proof, so complete in its evidence against me that it confuses even my own knowledge of facts. Daniel Crawton believes me guilty. That thought stings me to the heart; for I cannot tell how I value his good opinion. I would have worked day and night in his service only to gain—"

He was interrupted by another gentle whisper: "'As thy day so shall thy strength be.' My boy, it is good for us to pass under the rod sometimes. This trial is sent for some wise end; to teach some lesson that it was needful for you to learn."

As she spoke, her arm crept round his neck, and she raised his drooping face, which gradually calmed under her look, as if it gave him comfort and infused into him some of her own spirit.

Though so unobtrusive in her words and actions, Mrs. Crawton's religion was such a real, practical thing, so much a part of herself and her daily life, that there could be no distrusting the root of the hope which had carried her through so many trials, or question from whence came the influence which gave the delicate, soft-voiced woman such perfect sway over her children, and made her such a tower of strength and reliance to those about her.

There was a pause, which neither seemed inclined to break. It was Hugh who at length spoke.

"We have not thought of all the consequences, mother; again out of employment—a burden where I ought to be a help. Father is getting worse, and you and Margaret are over-working yourselves. I know it, though you try to hide it from me; then there is the rent."

"Hugh, there is for us the same Hand that fed the widow's cruse of oil. In our deepest poverty we have never been left to starve, and we shall not now."

His lips quivered. "But, mother, I must do something; I cannot eat if I do not work. My resolution is taken; if my character is not good enough for the counting-house, and I cannot be trusted with a pen and ledger, I will make a conquest of my pride, forget that I am a gentleman's son, and shoulder the labourer's shovel—anything to gain an honest crust. There is no disgrace in labour."

He seemed to be taking heart from his words, for his eyes brightened and his colour came back, as he continued, "God bless you, mother! you have done me good, as you always do. I would strain every nerve if I could only conquer my fate, and force my uncle to retract his words. I told him once that I was willing to begin at the lowest step of the ladder, so that I could raise myself at last; and if I have the chance given me I will do it yet, for I cannot believe I was born to live and die under foot."

CHAPTER XXX.

CHECK FOR CHECK.

"WELL, Royton, we must have quick decisions and short answers, for we can only count upon three-quarters of an hour before the governor is back again; after that time we shall not be safe. I wanted you yesterday, and as I passed your desk I made a sign for you to follow me into the office; but I suppose you did not see it."

"Yes, I did, Mr. Danson."

"Then why did you not attend to me?"

"Because I could not spare the time."

"You could not!" repeated with a haughty gesture of surprise. "I can scarcely suspect you of intentional insolence, but that sounds to me very much like 'would not.'"

"Perhaps it does, sir; you may say would not, if that pleases you better;" and Giles Royton, who had, uninvited, helped himself to a seat, went coolly on with his occupation of twisting a strip of paper into a variety of fantastic shapes.

Mark Danson contracted his brows. For the past few days he had been conscious of an inexplicable change in the clerk's manner towards himself—a something wanting, which might have warned him that he was losing what power he might have held over the man's fears and scruples, and that henceforth all show of respect from Eleanor's father would be a mere mockery of their relative positions. Giles Royton saw the dull gleam in his eyes, and the involuntary clench of his hand as he said—

"This to me, Royton! What am I to understand?"

"Anything you please, sir;" and a sort of derisive smile lurked for an instant round the man's mouth. Mark Danson was enraged beyond all prudence and self-control.

"This is insufferable, fellow! I have borne enough of this kind of insolence from you lately; you are

presuming upon my unfortunate connection with your daughter; but you may draw the bow too tight. I warn you that it may be dangerous to provoke me."

The time was past when Mark Danson's anger was an occasion of fear and trembling to his uncle's clerk. The menace in his words fell on unmoved ears; even the sight of his face, almost livid with passion, did not affect that exasperating coolness. He was still smiling when he threw away the twisted strip of paper, and leaned back in his chair, repeating, "Dangerous! I can believe that, taking into account what you have already done in other quarters. I happen to know that you don't always give warning beforehand."

"What do you mean, Royton?"

"I will tell you presently, when you are not so much excited. First come to the business that made you send me here; ten minutes of the time is gone now," glancing at the timepiece as he spoke.

Mark Danson writhed in his chair, he knew that he had made a false move, and suffered himself to be betrayed into losing his temper, when his policy should have been to conciliate. He was still working to gain possession of the paper which neither persuasion nor threats could induce Eleanor to give up. His last hope rested in her father, and that morning he had expected to receive his final answer. "Fool," he said, mentally—"fool that I was to shew my hand so soon! why not wait until I had squeezed the sponge?"

He spoke in a conciliating tone. "Royton, you have brought this upon yourself; you know that I am accustomed to exact and receive all proper respect from my uncle's clerks, and it is not likely that I can in any case forget what is due to my position in the firm."

"Certainly not, sir," acquiesced Giles Royton, in the same cool tone which he had preserved throughout the interview.

The other looked at him suspiciously from under his bent brows. He was painfully in the dark about that alteration of manner of which he complained, for mixed with the man's dislike, which he now made no attempt to disguise, there was a sting of cool contempt, which chafed him more because it came from a source which he was accustomed to despise. Then there had been words used, which he recalled with a lurking sense of uneasiness. Perhaps his own conscience had given them a point, for they seemed to imply a double meaning—a knowledge of something which might possibly be turned against himself.

"Five minutes more gone," said Royton, composedly, keeping his eyes fixed on the timepiece. "We have only half an hour now."

"Ah, yes, to be sure—only half an hour. I'm glad you reminded me." And Mark Danson shuffled nervously among some papers on his desk. He had lost his usual self-command, and did not feel him-

self master of the situation. "Well, Royton, I have waited your own time. When last we talked this over, you agreed to consider my proposal, and try what you could do to influence Eleanor to see where her real interest lay. As I expect, you have kept faith with me. I sent for you this morning to ask if you can give me a decided answer."

"Yes, sir, I can."

Mark leaned forward, his voice sharp and eager, as he said, "Of course she consents to give up the paper, but will she promise, and accept the terms I offer: a comfortable life provision, and ease and happiness for yourself and her in a new land, until circumstances enable me to acknowledge her?"

Giles Royton was generally slow of speech and movement. Mark breathed an anathema on the sluggish tongue, and in his impatience would like to have shaken the words from him. They came at last: "No doubt a liberal offer on your side, and very kind of you to think of saving us trouble, and packing us off so snugly out of everybody's way; but there's no law for ruling the obstinacy of women, and your wife happens to be one who makes up her mind for once and all. She refuses to promise anything, and her message to you is, that she asks nothing but what it is right you should give."

"And the paper," struck in Mark, almost breathless with suppressed rage, and the excitement which he found it so hard to govern.

"She will not give it up."

"And you have failed to get it from her?"

"Yes."

"Then you have miserably bungled the affair, as I might have foreseen. Why did you not use other means, as I suggested? You surely knew which was her private drawer, and might have borrowed her keys without her knowledge."

"You mean that *I*, her father, should have sneaked into her chamber like a thief, and stolen her papers."

"Yes, if you will take that ugly view of a little harmless transaction. I say, if she is blind to her own advantage, you have a right to act for her."

"I'm not sure that it is for her advantage; but even if it was, I could not bring myself to play that thief's trick on my child. I could never look Nelly in the face again."

"Sentimental rubbish!" sneered Mark. "You led me to believe that you took a sensible view of the matter, and would aid me to the best of your power. I see now that you have been playing me double."

"And if I have," replied Royton, quietly, "can you wonder that, being so long associated with a master hand at the game like yourself, I try to emulate you now and then?"

Mark Danson turned fiercely upon him. "Look here, Royton, if you value your place you will keep civil. Not to waste time in talk that will only make things worse between us, tell me if you have counted

the cost, and taken into account the possible result of this obstinacy of your daughter."

"That is easily done, Mr. Danson. As Eleanor will not resign her claim (and even your uncle could not blame her for that), you will be compelled to acknowledge your marriage."

"Never, Giles Royton! I could not, if I had the wish; for my proud old uncle would never forgive the ruse which I have practised to hide this wretched secret, beside the disgrace of such a marriage. For me, his adopted son and successor, to give him as a niece the daughter of one of the least respectable among his clerks—a gambler!"

He almost hissed out the last word, which he flung defiantly at his listener, as something that would hit and hurt. It did both. A deadly paleness came over Giles Royton's face, and with it a strange, pained look.

"Gambler!" he muttered to himself; "that is true enough: it has drained my money, and kept me down. But, Nelly, this is something new." He rose to his feet, and stood before the master's desk, stooping his shoulders like one who already began to feel his age. Standing thus, with the light falling on his thin grey hair, something of the old deprecating manner seemed to have come back; but now there was another look, a new expression, that made it seem anything but a feeble face. Mark Danson took silent note of him. He spoke in a changed voice: "Is this true, sir? Am I the bar between you two? Is it because she belongs to me that you are ashamed to acknowledge Nelly?"

The answer was an evasion: "You might have known that long ago."

The clerk shifted his position, making a slight shuffling noise with his feet. He had turned away his face, gazing through the dull office window with a wistful far-off look, that took in poor Eleanor in the shabby little house in Islington, and went back over the stream of years to the time when she was a child. He talked as if to himself: "Poor Nelly! I never guessed that I was the clog that kept her down. I shall find it hard to bear till I am used to it, but my years can't be many, and she has to live when I am dead." He turned again to Mark. "I have made up my mind, sir. If you will claim your wife, and try to make up for past neglect, I will give her up—never ask to see her except at a distance, or go away altogether if you would like it better. It need never be known who was her father; and, for the rest, she will be as much a lady as any of them."

Mark Danson stared blankly at the speaker, whose

words were giving the vexed subject a turn which he had not expected, and could not comprehend in his own selfish scepticism. If he had had any latent faith in the better part of human nature, and there had been any chord of feeling to be stirred into sympathy with what was good and true, he could not but have been moved by that touch of diviner nature working in Giles Royton—the one redeeming impulse that was capable of lifting him up from moral degradation to the virtue of a great self-sacrifice, which had in it no alloy of worldly motive.

Without waiting to be answered, he went on ruffling his scanty hair like one who did not quite know what he did, with the look of old age showing more plainly on him. "Yes, sir, I will cast myself off from Nelly; give her entirely to you and your world, and keep myself always out of her way and yours. I will do it for her sake, and ask nothing—only your word that you will be a true husband to her."

But Mark Danson met the passionate appeal with unmoved eyes. "You talk of what is impossible," he said, hastily. "Nothing that you can do would keep it from being known that I had married out of my sphere. I tell you it cannot be done."

"Which means that you will not do her justice."

"Yes, if you call it so. I mean that I cannot now present your daughter to the world as Mrs. Danson."

"Then you are a greater villain than I took you for, even when—" He stopped abruptly, and left the sentence unfinished.

Mark watched the hardening face, wondering at the revulsion of feeling which he read there. "If she would only consent to my arrangement, which would settle everything so comfortably," he murmured.

"She will not," said the father, fiercely; "and if it rests with me, she shall not!"

"Then you are reckless of the ruin which will fall upon yourself?"

"Yes; reckless of any hurt that you can do me, for I happen to hold a check against you, and fear goes further than anything with cowards."

"What, fellow! you shall repent this."

"Wait, sir; I have not quite said my say." As Giles Royton spoke, he came closer to him, and whispered, "I hold proof that you are a forger!"

Those words were potent enough to make Mark Danson start as if he had been stung, and leave him cowed and trembling, gazing with a kind of abject terror into the face of the man who had spoken them.

(To be continued.)

A WORD UPON DRIED-UP BROOKS.

BY THE REV. W. M. STATHAM.

THERE is a remarkable sentence in the Book of Kings, which furnishes a world of suggestiveness in relation to common life; the words are these: "And it came to pass after a time that the brook dried up;" and that must be a dull mind indeed which is not at once started on a career of contemplation by so graphic and suggestive a sentence from the page of inspiration.

There are many springs of pleasure in this world. Nature has not more watercourses in her sylvan glades than has human life. We may drink almost anywhere. What pursuits we may follow, what books we may read, what friendships we may make, what paths of study we may tread, what varieties of pleasure we may enjoy! It is wonderful how many inlets of pleasure there are to the human heart; the hundred gates of the golden city were not half so wonderful as these openings to the heart.

We may choose, too; saying, "*Here* I will drink, and *here*. These shall be my brooks, the streams where I will quench my thirst."

Nothing, however, is half so wonderful as the drying up of these brooks. The muddy bottom soon shows itself beneath the surface-waters; the cup we drink from grates against the gravel, and in a little time our favourite stream is dry.

This cannot but be in a world like this. All human waters are surface-wells, and earth's water-springs, where they do not harm us with their comminglings of corruption, at all events very soon pass away.

This little picture in Old Testament history first reminds us that where human waters are not *pernicious*, they are *perishable*. Some are pernicious; I am not just now referring to them. Base pleasures, burning and consuming passions—black waters in which the soul is drowned, the very waters of perdition—these there are, struck out of human hearts by the shaft of sin! It is enough to see these around us, to mark their deadly danger. Vice carries with it its own condemnation. Its sermons are the spectacles it presents. Large type ones, indeed, they are. All may read in human faces and histories the melancholy results of drinking from the poison-springs. The trembling nerve, the sunken eye, the restless manner, the whole impress of the face, tell the tale.

There are other waters than these. The sippings of the stream of literature, and social pleasantries, and scientific researches, and sweet home-loves and joys. Poetry has sung of these, painting

has pictured them, romance has coloured them, nor am I about to disparage them. God forbid. Let him be our witness that many of us who read these words find in them our choicest human hopes and joys! Without them the world would be an arid desert; its only refuge, the grave-gate entrance to a better life.

Limpid and lovely brooks are these, not pernicious when filled with thoughts of the kind Father who gave them to us, and of that blessed Saviour who, having redeemed us by his blood, has re-consecrated for us the world as part of his kingdom; but—and here it is that this history picture has such power in it—these human waters anyhow and anywhere are earthly and exhaustible. They do not fail *at once*, but after a little while the brook dries up.

The next idea that the picture suggests is, that where waters once dry up they are not in this world resurgent again. They rise nevermore—nevermore. We all remember what Longfellow says of Kavanagh's Christian life: "It resembled a well into which stones and rubbish had been thrown, but underneath is a spring of fresh, pure water, which nothing external can ever check or defile." Most true, and beautiful as true. But this is not the case with earthly wells. As the waters ebb we must look for no spring-tide again. When, for instance, our *senses* fade, can they be restored? The blind landscape painter looks for no return of other days; time was when his pencil was his all. Sitting on the borders of the lake, where the green waters curled up the grey cliffs as if emulous to reach the height where the eagle had built its nest, the dark pine forest above, with the thick trees standing there in the broken coast like a troop of armed men, the painter could then, with a few wise touches, spread on his canvas the beauties of the lake, and fix with the touch of genius the moods of Nature as he gazed upon her face. But for that pleasure he looks no more. All the pictures before him now are those hung in the chamber-galleries of the heart where the light of memory shines; time and toil have dimmed his vision, the pleasant brook of other days is dry!

Yes! And it is drying with the scholar and the student, as some darting arrow through the brain compels them to study only for one passing hour. It is drying with the sculptor, when his trembling hands can scarcely grasp his tools. This is the very condition of life on earth. We cannot complain of it. What right have we to the possession of such a wonderful being at all, or to such a

beautiful world as this? Who made the eye, that most wondrous mirror in the universe? Who made the ear, that most wonderful harpsichord on which sound falls so pleasantly? And who placed us in a world with such wise and varied adaptations, with such interest for each, with such scope for all? We cannot murmur because nothing abides, because earthly brooks dry up! We can but wonder that amid all the dangers our own sin has introduced we are here so long. If, then, these earthly wells dry up, and rise in freshness no more for us, then the question arises—must we submit? Is that all? Is piety only a resignation to mortality? Is religion only an acquiescence in decay? If earthly wells dry up, are there no waters which never fail? We all, as Christians, know full well there are.

The picture next suggests that when waters dry up it is well if the heart that drank of them does not wither too. Most men have seen, at all events, some instances of this. Marvellous changes have often been wrought in the human spirit by the startling experiences of one day: the shipwreck of an only son, the failure of some speculative venture, the consumptive withering of a darling girl, the falling by the wayside of life's dear companion, the disappointment of some desperate desire. The waters have dried up, and the heart which drank so deeply of them is parched and feverish and broken. We do not know how deeply we are drinking till the fountain dries. Maybe we have deceived ourselves, and the season of discovery has come. I have read in Scottish story of the faithful dog, who when the minister was dead and buried, would not leave his master's grave, but night and day watched by the tomb. Instinct of love! the more beautiful because he has no soul to wrong. But we! Is it beautiful in us to sit by our old idols, and when they are broken worship them?—to haunt the dried-up brook and perish ourselves of thirst? Alas! how often human hearts turn coldly and disdainfully away from all human sympathy, and say, "Disturb me not!" The brook is dry, but there they wander by the old watercourse, mingling together sighs and tears; then comes—

"—— Moody and dull Melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless Despair:
And at her heels, a huge infectious troop
Of pale distempers and foes to life."

There need be no withered hearts. There always will be when this world, even on its innocent side, is too attractive; when God is forgotten in his gifts; when heaven is lost sight of in the felt blessedness of earth; when, in fact, the pilgrimage is more thought of than the shrine to which it leads. Let us write above all our brooks, "This too will dry," and let us be wise enough to remem-

ber that the world in its most innocent aspects passeth away.

The picture next suggests by force of contrast, that there are brooks to be enjoyed even on earth, where the waters never dry up. "He shall drink of the brook in the way," says the Psalmist: "therefore shall he lift up the head." There are many spiritual brooks fed by one Fountain, even "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever," and these never dry up. The meditation of the closet, the services of God's house, the witnessing of the Spirit, the communion with Christ, the foretastes of heaven, the anticipations of the Father's house—these divine sources of consolation and rest never fail. Wherever sickness may confine us, or travel take us, or solitude leave us, there we are with Christ. The facts of consciousness are as real and true as the facts of nature, and we know that the Lord is there. Supplies of grace and strength carried into the heart are as patent to the mind as supplies carried into the beleaguered fortress are to the imprisoned people. We drink and live from these as fountains of our highest joy. We are not cynics or ascetics, we drink of many human streams; but even these are connected with the one Fountain, and have all their channels coloured by communion with Christ.

After a time this brook, instead of being dry, is as full and free as ever. It is impossible to overstate the case here. I have read that it was the plan of the late John Angell James to read the 103rd Psalm in his family every Sunday evening; but a great bereavement came, his life companion passed away. He opened the inspired book, he trembled and turned a leaf or two over, and said, "Why not?" Then with a trembling voice he commenced: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." It is something in all seasons to be able to rest in the Lord, and to drink of that one divine fountain which never fails.

And then this stream of living water flows on for ever. Jacob's well is dry, but Jacob is drinking of one which flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. Heaven is the place where there are pleasures at God's right hand for evermore. Human experiences are too varied to understand them, or to reduce them by any inductive law to certain forms. A photograph of hearts would be quite as varied as a photograph of faces, but we may be well assured of this, that the happiest men and women in the nineteenth century are Christians; their pleasures like their principles lay hold on that which is everlasting.

The pleasures of the world may seem more attractive, there may be more of outward stir and excitement connected with them, and their pursuers appear to live in the atmosphere of delirious joy. But it is not so, it is only for a season, and then reaction—the dread reaction—sets in.

But the pleasures of religion are as permanent as they are powerful. Blessed is the man who trusts in God! Outward changes will indeed occur to him as to others, but he will bear about

with him the joy of immortality in his own heart, even that fountain of which our Saviour declares, "It shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

BLIND—long blind! nay, never sun hath shone
Through that dead sense upon the imprisoned brain.
Blind! and the light of all the world goes by,
And he looks vacant into darkness still.
O spirit, shut untimely in thy tomb,
Sad heart, to whom the world is utter dark,
A weary loneliness, few silent alms,
And passing voices and the tread of feet,
'Twere better surely thou didst lie among
The dead, who feel not hunger, want, or woe,
And have no care to see, but, sightless, sleep
The burden of unanswered life away.
What hopes were thine are tamed to dull content,
And unrepining need, monotonous,
Fixed pleadings ever 'twixt the world and thee.
Lo! now One passeth who hath good for all!

Arise! put from thee thy soul's impotence,
The plaint for alms, the wonted weary moan;
Cry loud! besiege Him with thy prayers, spare not.
What though the dust should stain thy lips, embrace
His feet—forbid with tears their going till
He blesseth thee whose blessings echo God.

O happy sight! O holy, happy dawn!
New world, new skies, thyself new born to them,
New life beyond thyself, and in the sun,
The broad world taking of the sun, the hills
That lift thy soul above thee, face of man,
With thoughts untold and yet most visible.

But thou hast seen, more precious far than these,
The Star of Life, the Sun of Righteousness,
And in thy heart an endless day begins,
For Christ shall be thy light for evermore.

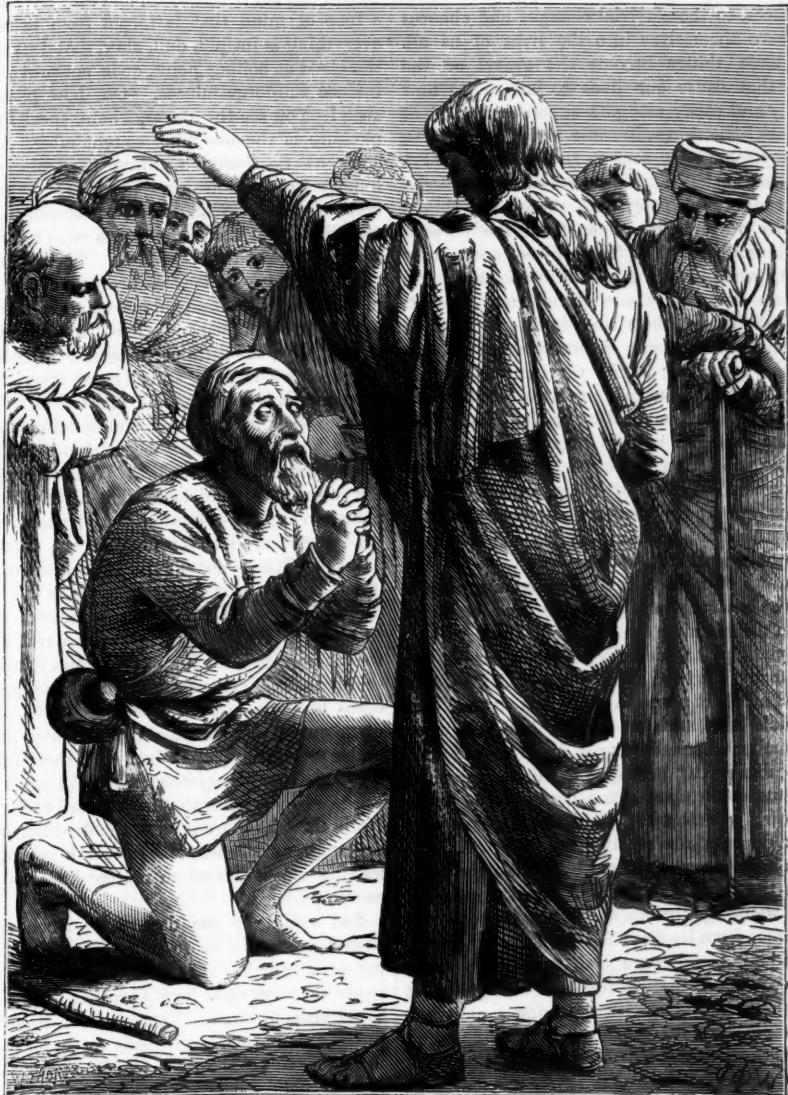
J. S. W.

ON THE LITTLE THINGS OF LIFE.

AAM not speaking of babies. Sidney Smith somewhere says that no house is perfect that does not contain a baby and a kitten. With this I rather agree. There is a wonderful fund of cheeriness in a house that counts these amongst its treasures; and, underlying each, there is much that is hidden. A baby implies much expectation, mingled hopes and fears, anxious guesses, joyous castle-building, diligent preparation. Then there is the joy when it arrives, the thankfulness that all is well, the new arrangements to be made in the household, the queer mistakes—if it be the *first*,—the ups and downs in the frail, early life of the little creature. On this follows the strange linking-in of that helpless being into all the life of the parents. How wondrously does it expand the heart, and purify and raise the affections, and add new motives of action to the life! And as the babe grows out of babyhood, still how the babyhood time is kept in memory, and its little nameless incidents cherished in the family traditions. There seems still to be a baby, where the living fact no longer is found.

And a grand story lingers round the kitten in the family. Perhaps it is found some day in the

garden by the children a poor, stray waif in the world. Perhaps it is born on the premises, and one day appears, to the perfect wonderment of the family circle. Then, how many pleasures quickly surround it, and of what future hopes does it soon become the centre, in the nursery! But around this anxieties cluster. Kittens do not come singly. Most parents object to the whole brood being kept. Then arises the difficulty: what is to be done with those not wanted? It is a moment the father looks forward to with dread, but one which he has to face. It requires a good share of moral courage. At length he proposes that three out of four should be drowned. He knows how this proposal will be met. He shrinks from the reproachful looks, from the muttered surprise, from the low esteem in which his character for kindness *must* sink for the time. He can realise the hesitation of the child as she pointed at last to the twins in the cradle, and picked out the one she would like to be kept. But at last it is over, and the *one* kitten spared so absorbs the attention and love of the children that all the sad past is forgotten, and the father rises to his usual place in their eyes. The graceful gambols, the winning ways, the pretty tricks of the kitten, these make gladness by the happy fire-



(Drawn by J. D. WATSON.)

"Cry loud! besiege Him with thy prayers, spare not."—p. 584.

side. Yes, baby and kitten are grand institutions in a house.

But I am not now going to speak of these. I refer to those little incidents of life, to those small occurrences, to those trivial changes and chances that weave themselves into the lives of us all. These little things become the gravel or the grease, that cause our lives to jar, or to flow smoothly and easily along. I suppose we all meet with these little things in some form or other. To some they come as gravel to the teeth, to others as oil that makes life's wheels run noiselessly. And I cannot but fancy that these little things get much of their character from the persons upon whom they light. The whitest snow loses its purity when it falls upon the black mud; and the foulest water sparkles with brilliancy when it has passed through the cleansing filter. And we all know how the same event becomes a very chameleon, according to the varying condition of bodily health. A joke calls forth the laugh or the snub, as it falls on the healthy or the bilious subject. The scene we witness engages the interest, or provokes the sneer, as the nap of our temper is ruffled or smooth. The joyous temper of our companion is kept up or depressed in proportion as it finds in us a like condition. A slap on the back from an old friend brings out the hearty grasp of hand, as we turn in pleased astonishment; or it twists the features into a nasty expression if we forgot in the morning the right side of our bed.

And yet how wonderfully forgetful people are of the fact, that the little things of life have so powerful an effect upon us. It seems strange that they *should* have such an effect. And yet, when we remember how each day is made up of small, unnoticeable events, perhaps the wonder vanishes. Few of us come upon great occasions of joy or of sorrow; we all meet with many things that raise or depress, we hardly know how. A look, with its mute expressiveness, how full of power it is upon the sensitive spirit! A word, carelessly, lightly, wantonly thrown forth, what a development comes from its tiny life! A sneer, a meaning laugh, how it is photographed upon the memory with an unfading distinctness! A shrug, how it telegraphs its meaning with lightning rapidity; a kindly smile, how it sends a warmth and cheering influence through our whole soul! A shake of the hand, or gentle pressure at the right moment, how it sends the blood bounding, and quickens the fainting heart! Little things, all these, but we know that the life that is in them is strong, and that it is a life that passes not away without leaving its abiding mark upon us.

I often grieve over the lessening power of little pleasures upon an increasing number of people. We live in a fast age. Everything appears to grow to maturity more rapidly than it used to do. Too

many children are victims to ennui ere they are out of their teens. Life palls upon them. They have exhausted the excitements of life, all that wealth can set before them, and they have acquired a tone of mind that is torpid from exhaustion; everything is insipid, dull, slow, that does not keep the blood at boiling point, or is not provocative of intense self-forgetfulness. Oh, how pitiable are such! You see them everywhere, specially where pleasure is the one thing sought after. At Spas, such as Scarborough, more particularly, what hungry faces you are ever meeting! What keen, restless eyes! What strange attempts to attract attention! So many one meets who never knew what it means to be young! Their young life is passing away under the direction of a scheming mother, or with companions who are devoted to the capture of a husband. The dress, the manners, the sly ways, the little peculiarities, the companion dog, the varied tricks; and all to get married! How sickening it is to watch and mark it all! What a treat to see a fresh, young, simple-minded girl! to mark the unaffected self-forgetfulness that guides her movements and her life! What a contrast to the unreality around her; what a relief from the manœuvring self-assertion that irritates! And yet I cannot see *why* it should be so; it is all unnatural. This is not the untaught heart of youth; it is the education, the false tone of life around them, the low aims that are inculcated, that are to blame. To such life is never a real time for work, for energy, for high aspirations, for generous self-devotion. There are too few elevating influences brought to bear upon our youth, specially upon our gentle, lovable girls. They grow up under a system that is bad, and their life takes its bent from the system. Everything is forced. Progress—progress, that is the word of the period. Little thought there is as to the direction in which the progress is made, and so that a person keeps moving on, it seems to matter little as to the course pursued.

Sad would be the day to me when the pest should appear in those now growing up around my quiet hearth. It is one of my great pleasures to see the downright hearty joy that little pleasures bring into our circle. There is no mistake in that flush of happiness as we sally forth, for instance, for a long ramble along the cliffs of our favourite seaside holiday-place. I almost feel it due to apologise for classing such a thing amongst our pleasures. Strange it may appear that young people now-a-days should choose to leave the crowded Spa, and gay promenade, for a scramble up and down the cliffs, and for an evening with the flowers. Strange that they should leave the fantastic, ill-assorted colours *there*, for the pure and lovely hues in which Nature is dressed. And yet it is so, and glad is my heart within me to see it.

And then the incidents of the walk: the chat with the rough but kindly farmer; the surprise at the process of milking that lovely Alderney cow; the keen enjoyment of the warm, unwatered milk; the treasures of flowers and ferns; the little surprises from all sorts of sights and sounds peculiar to a summer's eve in England; the renewal of it all when home is reached, as the whole is poured rapidly forth to mamma; the simple supper, the loving good night, and hearty thanks for the pleasures of the evening—these are ingredients of a happiness that is utterly unknown to multitudes. Flat, stale, and unprofitable they would be to that young flirty, self-conscious maiden, whose head is full of schemes, and whose heart is losing all its freshness.

It is the unreal, forced mode of life in these days that puts all such little things in the shade. And yet, in a family, how sweet and how potent the influence of them falls. Life with its excitements and several pleasures divides a family. Each member grows sadly independent of the rest. Each has his own life, and that generally leads him away from those nearest to him. But the little pleasures of life tell just the other way. These unite and harmonise, because naturally endowed with power to do so, and because they must be enjoyed together. Each feels their spell. The small pleasure seems to expand and develop itself, as it is enjoyed by each after his own individuality. It is turned round, as it were, and it is examined on every side. Not a point escapes notice, as each in turn exhibits the bearing of it on his own experience. And we may judge well of that group that, out of such small material, has constructed a stronghold of quiet happiness for itself. As years go by, and as each member grows up and takes part in active life, it is no small rest to the spirit to go back to those long-past years, and to enjoy in something of their freshness the happy days once more. Pure they were in the reality, they *must* be restful in the remembrance. Many changes have been since then, and the young spirits have grown old, and many a one has dropped out of this changeful life, but the memory gathers them together again, and the thoughts are pervaded by hope of a meeting once more.

But there are the little ills of life. Yes, sad things are these, but powerful, and with much to do, which they are always doing. These are those nasty gravel stones, that put the machine of daily life so much out of order; and yet we can hardly find them, after the most diligent search. The result is plain, sadly clear and distinct, but the cause is secret. I don't say that people do not *fancy* that they discover the cause; they find a good deal of it in the habits, the thoughtlessness, the tempers of others. Still this does not seem

to explain it quite fully. If the supposed offender depart, and the course seems clear, something else starts up, and all is as wrong as ever. We do not look at home. True, others may have been a kind of flint and steel, but where was the tinder? or we may have been the flint and steel, and yet cried out when the spark we struck fell where we tried to throw it. Little mistakes, little wrong looks, little jars, little replies, little sarcasms, little jokes at the wrong time; oh! do not these things throw many a family into continual hot water?—so small, so ridiculous, and yet like the seed of mustard do they grow, and shelter many ugly birds beneath the branches. Many little ills of life we *cannot* cure or remove. We cannot stop that plaguing throb of the tooth, that is not bad, but enough to spoil our peace; we cannot cut that bore that *will* haunt our steps; we cannot make our servants replace our books right end uppermost, nor place our boxes with the lock side available; we cannot avoid the annual spring cleaning, when the spiders are driven from their quiet homes beneath the furniture, to seek for resting-places in our coats and hats; we cannot stop the strange accumulation of business that our yearly holiday seems to create—all such things are inevitable, and we try to bow to them with as good a grace as may be. In our moments of gladness, and when the bilious fit is off, we may even make laughter arise out of some of these, though it may have a tinge of grimness in it. But there are plenty of little ills that *are* removable. We need not ask a man to a dinner we know he hates; we need not look sour when all try to coax us; we need not snap when we dare not bite, nor growl when we dare not snap; we need not make a proposal that we know beforehand is disagreeable; we need not stroke man, woman, or child the wrong way of the hair; we need not always try to be disagreeable, in some little point, to anybody or to everybody; we need not think a thing is white only because our friend thinks it black; we need not bring out our favourite hobby, and air it up and down for the special annoyance of another; we need not always carry about a wet blanket wherever with to smother every little joy. It is beyond count the harm that is done by little, removable ills—by words and deeds that hardly seem equal to work so large an amount of mischief; yet we all know that mischief *is* done by them, and often worse than more threatening artillery would scatter. These things—*little things*, compared with the great occurrences of life—just give the daily tone to many a family circle, and to many a neighbourhood.

There are the little gentlenesses of life. Yes; but these are easier to admire, or to regret, than they are to practise. Some persons affect

to despise them as trivial, or beneath the notice of important people like themselves. I do not believe that *any* persons *really* despise them, at least when their own days are made happy by their influence. That human nature that indulges in such strange vagaries, is pretty much the same thing at bottom. Underneath all the varied masks, in each different rank of life, there is the same thing to work upon, more or less. And so I hold that no one is proof against the little gentlenesses of life. On this principle we should always do a kind thing in a kind way. Sadly this is neglected. Favours conferred, each one labelled as a favour, and bestowed with the tongs, as it were, have a bitterness in them that takes away all their pleasantness. I even like to consider the feelings of a beggar, when induced to feel that he is one to relieve. I hate to throw the pence at him through the window. I should not like it myself. It seems to me that they will be sweeter to him from the hand of one of my little girls, and in the cheery smile with which he takes them from her I read that they are so. Perhaps it brings a blessing upon *her* head likewise. A friend of mine, very susceptible about such matters, was much touched not long ago by one of these thoughtful, gentle touches. He had been away from his parish, for his usual holiday, and on his return, was sitting thankful in his quiet home again. Presently he was roused by the sound of music, and the village band was in the garden, playing "Home, sweet home," as its best greeting. It was a genuine act of love for what he had done for the band, seeing that the rules forbade a gift of money. It seemed to invigorate him for further effort. How much power we all have, be our station high or low, to gladden many a life by gentle words and tender actions. The slaves of fashion, the fastidious, the selfish, the proud, know well the soothing force there is in these little things, though they take no part in shedding it around them. Where the pressure of care, or sorrow, or poverty is found, *there* we more commonly find these flowers of life flourishing. And amongst the poor we are ever meeting with these gentle acts, one to another; amidst much to repel, in the envy, the jealousy, the spiteful tales, the want of truth, we find much of sympathy, of active help, of self-denial for a neighbour. And how alive the poor are to these things! See the gentle, thoughtful lady in her visits of charity: no rude entry, as if the knocking at the door was not to be thought of; no visit at meals, as if to spy out the nakedness, or to learn the plenty, of the land; no gift bestowed with a manner that chills, and with words that sting and fret. No! the kindly look; the interested inquiries; the finding out the best side of things, as a starting-point for loving advice

or loving rebuke; the ways of showing that the visit is no act of condescension, but that real desire to benefit, the fruit of unselfish love, brought her steps there--these things lift up weary spirits and brighten sad lives. How much might be done, each to each, in common daily life, to bring out the blue sky and the bright sun, with all the cheering influences they spread around. Never withhold a little gentle act, never keep from speaking the little gentle word, because it is *so* little, *so*, to all appearance, trivial. You know not to what such things may grow. Cast such bread upon all waters.

Closely linked with these are the little surprises in life. What a genial glow these diffuse over many a heart! How surprised we often are to find so much good in persons of whom we had but a poor opinion! Some occasion brought it out, some want to be relieved, some activity to be set in motion, some plan to be carried out, difficulties to be met; these opportunities came in the way, and we are surprised to see people rising to the occasion. We come upon many of these surprises in a family. How different are the characters of children. How strangely we oftentimes judge them. How mistaken we are, and how wrong when we are not very careful observers of character, from a somewhat enlarged experience. It is oftentimes a complaint with parents that their children *are* so different. It is well that it is so. The various tempers and dispositions act and re-act one upon another. By-and-by we are surprised to find how so different and so opposite tempers and tastes have wrought upon each other, and for the good of the whole.

One instance I remember, in Washington Irving's works, of a surprise very gladdening and full of happiness. A man's affairs went wrong, and he found himself one morning a beggar. How could he tell his wife, that dear, tender creature, who knew not of the rough places of life? He dreaded it intensely. At last all was told, and they removed into a cottage. The harp his wife so loved, and which had been associated with old memories, was kept as a link with the happy past. But how he feared as he approached that humble cottage, for the first time, at the end of the day! He dreaded the effect of the change upon *her* spirits. To his surprise he heard the sound of music. "It was Mary's voice, singing, in a style of the most touching simplicity, a little air of which her husband was peculiarly fond." Soon her happy face glanced out at the window, and she came out saying, "My dear George, I am so glad you are come. I have been watching and watching for you, and running down the lane and looking out for you. I've set out a table under a beautiful tree behind the cottage, and I've been gathering some of the most delicious strawberries,

for I know you are fond of them, and we have most excellent cream, and everything is so sweet and still here. Oh," said she, putting her arm within his, and looking brightly in his face—"oh, we shall be so happy!"

It is a most imitable piece of nature! Wonderful was *that* surprise to *him*. I think we can all prepare some similar ones, each in his station, and as opportunity offers, by means of which light shall cross the path of many a weary wayfarer. Not only is the love and thoughtfulness a soothing influence; the grand thing is to find these things where we looked not for them, even

where we looked for everything the reverse. Let us try and spread these little surprises on every side of us.

Of course the list might be extended to any length. Many instances of the power of little things will readily suggest themselves. I think that in every rank of life some leisure would be well bestowed in attending to their influence. Amidst the din and roar of politics, controversies, fashionable assemblies, and such like, there would be a strange softening down of tempers, and marvellous happy changes to be seen—the result of "Little Things."

W. T. V.

ANGELICA.

 HAT is that pretty green leaf which grows beside the river in the glen?" asked Emily.

"If you bring me a specimen, I dare say I shall be able to tell," replied Mary.

"Here's a beautiful branch I found close by the water's edge," said Charles, as he returned in a few minutes, carrying something like a fern-frond in his hand.

"That's the very thing!" exclaimed Emily. "Look, Mary, how nicely and evenly the small leaves are notched."

"Serrated, you mean, dear."

"But what is the plant called?"

"Wild angelica: is it not a pretty name?"

"Oh, yes, very; and what is the flower like?"

"I fear you will be disappointed in that, for it is nothing wonderful. The stem grows high, and on the top are a cluster of tiny white florets, something like the blossom of hemlock, wild carrot, and all plants of the class called umbelliferous. The most curious thing about angelica is the sheath, or covering, from which the leaves expand."

"Oh, Charles," said Emily, "we must watch our plant in the glen, and see the sheathes opening, and the little clusters of white flowers. What month does it blossom, Mary?"

"In July and August; but I think it prettier now, when the leaves are fresh and delicate, for they grow to a large size later in the season."

"How do you know so much about flowers, Mary?"

"When I was a little girl like you, Emily, I used to walk out with my mother, who told me the names of a great many plants. Angelica I shall never forget, because it was connected with the story of a child in whom I was much interested."

"Do, please, tell us about her."

"Well, I must commence at the beginning. My

mother and I used often to visit a poor woman, who lived near our gate, and had taken care of me when I was very young. She was now a widow, with one child of about three years old, who was a great pet and plaything of mine; and while my mother spoke to Eliza, I amused myself with little Lizzie. It was therefore a great grief to me to hear one morning that Eliza's child had taken scarlatina, and was dangerously ill. I was not allowed to go to the cottage, lest I should catch the complaint; and after a few days had passed, I heard the sad news that my little playfellow was dead.

"When all danger of infection was over, my mother and I renewed our visits to Eliza, and her grief burst out afresh at sight of us.

"'Miss Mary,' she exclaimed, 'I fear you'll find the cottage very lonesome now. Oh, how glad my darling used to be to see you coming! She's in heaven, among the bright angels; but her poor mother's heart is desolate, for she was all I had to love.'

"I could say nothing in reply, but I cried heartily. My mother tried to console the poor woman, by telling her that her heavenly Father had taken the child, in order to draw her heart more to himself; and that if she would trust him, he would not leave her desolate, even in this world, but would send her comfort and peace, until she should be reunited to her darling, who was 'not lost, but gone before.'

"When she became more composed we left her, promising to call again in a few days. On our next visit to the cottage, as we approached the door, we were surprised to hear a child cry.

"'Mamma,' I said, 'does not that sound as if little Lizzie were still alive?'

"Before she could answer we met Eliza, holding in her arms a baby of a few months old, and looking more cheerful than when we had last seen her.

"'Where did you get that dear little child, Eliza?' I inquired.

"Indeed, Miss Mary, you may well ask; but I'll tell you all about it. Something came over me last night that I could not sleep, thinking of my poor little Lizzie, when towards morning I heard a low cry, like the voice of a baby. At first I couldn't believe it was real, but thought it must be one of my foolish fancies, for I have had a great many since my darling left me; but after a while, as I lay listening, I distinctly heard it again. It was daylight by this time, so I got up and went out. As soon as I opened the door, I again heard that pitiful cry, so I followed the sound till I got to the bank of the river, just where the tall plants grow, near the thorn-bush, and there among the green leaves I found this poor babe lying, half perished with cold and hunger. I took her in my arms and carried her home; and after swallowing a little warm milk, she slept quietly till about an hour ago. And now, ma'am," she continued, turning to my mother, "what ought I to do with the poor little thing?"

"Make inquiries first concerning the parents," she replied—"whether they are dead or have wickedly deserted their child; meantime I think you had better keep the little creature until we try to discover something about her; then, if nothing satisfactory can be ascertained, the parish is bound to support her."

"Oh, ma'am," said Eliza, "I would like to keep the poor babe myself, unless she has parents or some relations to look after her. I'm less lonesome than I was, for I feel as if my own Lizzie was come back to me again."

"We left the cottage shortly after, but were surprised early the next morning by a visit from Eliza, who came to tell us all she had found out the evening before. It appeared that after our departure, she had taken the little one in her arms, and set off on a voyage of discovery. First she visited the spot where the baby had been found; but although she carefully examined all around, there was no clue by which to trace any information. A path lay close by, which led to a neighbour's cottage, where Eliza determined to go, in hopes that the inmates might know something of the matter which perplexed her. She found the door open, and the woman of the house ran to meet her, in great excitement.

"Oh, Eliza," she said, "I was just going to send to ask you to come here, for I really don't know what to do; but I'll tell you all about it. This morning, at near four o'clock, I heard a low, knocking sound, and before I had time to get up, a loud noise, like a heavy fall. I roused my husband, and told him what I had heard, and we both went to the door, which we opened very cautiously. As we did so, a woman, who had fallen against it, slipped down flat across the threshold. We raised her, and carried her in. I lighted a candle, and we saw she had fainted. At first we supposed her dead, but after a while she moaned and opened her eyes. We did

our best to revive her, but our efforts were useless. Once, indeed, she moved her lips, as if trying to speak, but when we bent over her, all we could catch was, "My child! my child!" and she raised her hand with much difficulty, and pointed towards the door. We opened it immediately and looked round, but there was no child to be seen. I told my husband to go quickly for the doctor, and when he went, I was left alone with the dying woman. She was young, but very thin and white, and there was a look of care and sorrow on her face that it was pitiful to see. I whispered several times, "Where is your child?" and I could perceive a quiver in her eyelids, as if she was trying to unclose them; and her lips parted a little, but she had not power to speak. From that time she lay quite still, until the arrival of the doctor, who told us he could not be of any use, for the woman was dying; indeed, I knew that myself before he came. My husband and I stayed by her until she breathed her last, poor thing. And now tell me how you came by the child, for I'm sure it must be hers."

Eliza then told her story, and they came to the conclusion that the stranger, being quite overcome with fatigue and illness, and unable to carry her babe any longer, had laid the precious burden among the green leaves until she tried to make her way to the nearest cottage to seek assistance.

Many came to see the poor wasted form during the next few days, but all failed to recognise it, so that it was clear the woman was a stranger in that neighbourhood; and although every proper inquiry was made, nothing concerning her could be ascertained. Eliza refused all offers to relieve her of the child. The parish would not provide for it unless she gave up the charge; so she struggled on as best she could, treating the little one as her own. I was in great delight when she came to this decision, and as the baby had no clothes but those in which it had been found, and Lizzie's were all too large, I begged of my mamma to cut out a set of little things, the materials for which I bought out of my own pocket-money, and, with more patience than I had ever before shown, I made them all myself. When they were nicely washed and laid in a basket, I took them to the cottage. Eliza was greatly pleased with the present, but I own I was a little disappointed that baby did not appreciate them more; unfortunately, she was sleepy at the time, and therefore rather cross. 'And now, Eliza,' I said, 'if you have not made up your mind what to call the dear little pet, will you let me name her?'

"What would you wish her to be called, Miss Mary? I was thinking of "Lizzie," after my poor darling who is gone to heaven."

"Well, Eliza, I have a beautiful name in my head, and I think you will like it too. Mamma and I went to the very spot you found baby, and the tall plant, among the green leaves of which she was found,

is called "Angelica." If you think that too long, or too fine a name for a little girl, you could call her "Angel," that means messenger, you know; and you often said yourself she was sent to comfort you when your own Lizzie was taken.'

"Yes, Miss Mary, I like it very much. We'll have her christened after the plant she was found under, and she'll be my little Angel. I'm more sure than ever she was sent to me for a comfort, because the name seems to have come with her."

"I was very much pleased that Eliza approved of my favourite idea, and next week the little one was named Angelica; but her mother, as Eliza insisted on calling herself, always addressed her as Angel, and it did indeed seem as if she were a messenger from heaven, sent to comfort and cheer a bereaved heart.

"Soon little Angel became a playful child, able to run about and prattle, and great was my pleasure the first time her infant tongue could utter the difficult words, 'Miss Mary,' which Eliza had been for a long time teaching her. She was a pretty, sweet-looking child, with soft blue eyes and golden hair, clustering round her head in natural curls.

"As she grew older, I commenced teaching her to read, and it was my self-imposed task to spend an hour or two every day at Eliza's cottage, instructing little Angel; and soon she did me great credit, and was considered well educated for a girl in her station of life. She had not yet been told that Eliza was not really her mother, and her attachment to her was extreme; but when she was informed, throwing her arms round the neck of her kind friend, she exclaimed, 'What difference does that make? you have been as good as a mother to me, and I love you quite as well.'

"Eliza had a brother whom she had not seen for many years. He had left his father's house when almost a boy to seek employment, in fact, to push his fortune in the world, and succeeded, after some struggles and disappointments, in obtaining a situation in a large manufacturing town, where he married a girl to whom he had long been attached. Just then Eliza left her home to go to service, and knew little of her brother afterwards. She was aware that he had sailed for America, but nothing had been heard of him since his departure; nevertheless, he was not forgotten, for often in the time of her affliction and distress Eliza's lonely heart had yearned towards her only near relative. It was therefore with great joy that now, after the lapse of so many years, she received a letter, saying that he had just returned to this country, had traced out her present abode with some difficulty, and as soon as the business he was engaged in was concluded, would come to see her. My mother and I sympathised with Eliza in her joy, for we knew how much anxiety she had endured for many years, concerning her absent brother. And Angel was in great delight, and very impatient to see her new

uncle, as she insisted on calling him; but it was some time before the long-expected visitor arrived. He was a sad, careworn-looking man, whom Eliza declared she would not have recognised as the strong, joyous youth from whom she had parted in her girlhood. He seemed glad to meet his only sister once more, and though there was a weight of sorrow crushing his heart, of which he had not yet spoken, he tried to take an interest in Eliza's concerns, and asked many questions as to her past life.

"'What a comfort your daughter must be to you!' he said with a sigh. 'Come here to me, niece. What is your name, dear?'

"'Angelica,' she replied, in a soft, low voice; for now that he was come, she felt rather shy in the presence of the grave stranger.

"'Angelica,' he repeated; 'why did you give the girl such an uncommon queer name, Eliza?'

"'She's not my own child,' replied his sister; 'my poor little Lizzie died at three years old, and this one was sent to me in her place, so I called her Angel. I'll tell you the whole story another time, but I want to hear something about you now. What have you been doing in America, and where is your wife?'

"John's face grew very sad as he replied, 'I wish I could tell; but you shall hear all I know. For some time after my marriage I prospered well in my business; then things went against me. I had enemies, and the end of it was I lost my situation. I tried hard to get other employment, but found it impossible in that place. Meantime, we were living on the little money we had saved, until it came nearly to an end, and what was worse, my wife grew sickly; for she took our misfortunes greatly to heart, and we had one little baby only just born. When Jane was beginning to get a little better, I told her there was no help for it, I must go away somewhere at once to get work, and make a comfortable home for her and the child; so, as there was a vessel sailing for America, and I had heard great accounts of the wages workmen got there, we both thought that the best thing I could do was to go, and when I was able, send passage-money to bring her out too. We were in great grief parting, but comforted ourselves it would only be for a short time. We sold our furniture and all our other possessions, and she and the baby went into small lodgings, where I had every hope they would be able to struggle on till I could send for them; for Jane had a promise of plenty of needlework from some ladies who had employed her before.'

"'When I arrived at the end of my voyage, I wrote to my wife, but received no answer; afterwards I posted several letters entreating for a reply, but equally without success. At length I thought of writing to the woman with whom she lodged, and heard that Jane had left the place a few months after my departure, saying she would go to some relation of mine whose address she had discovered;

that she felt very ill herself, and wished to put the babe into the hands of some friend who would take care of it till my return, and if she succeeded in this plan, she meant to write and tell me.

"When I received this account I felt a little cheered, and watched for a letter every mail; but I was continually disappointed. I could not think whom she had gone to with the babe unless to you, for I had no other relative alive at the time, and I understood you were at service, for I had not heard of your marriage; and now, since you have no tidings, I fear wherever she went she never reached her destination. All the time I was away I had a lingering hope that when I came home I should make her out; but now I have made all the inquiries I can, and don't know where to try next."

"Eliza listened to this sad story in silence, but there was a look of deep thought in her face, as she glanced from time to time at Angel, who sat quietly beside her. Could it be the same thought which occurred to the minds of both? For as soon as John had finished speaking, the little girl rose, and stood close by him, looking into his face with an expression of deep interest, yet without uttering a word.

"John," said Eliza, after a pause, during which she had been considering deeply what was best to do, "I don't wish to excite false hopes, when I cannot be sure of anything; but just listen to how Angel came to me, and perhaps, when you put your story and mine together, we might make out something satisfactory between them." And then she related the whole account which I have already given you.

"John listened with breathless attention. 'I feel sure that poor dying woman was my wife,' he exclaimed. 'Tell me what you can remember of her appearance and dress, and, above all, at what time this took place.'

"Eliza easily described her, for the image of the dead woman was indelibly impressed on her memory. She could also remember that these events had occurred exactly thirteen years ago, which, they calculated, would be just three months after John had parted from his wife to go to America. All these circumstances agreeing, rendered it so likely that he had at length recovered his child, and, at the same time, discovered the fate of his wife, that Eliza, to put an end to further doubt, sent for the woman who had witnessed the death of Angel's mother; and after telling their reasons for inquiring, found out that there was still to be had the faded remains of a shawl which the deceased had worn. John at once recognised the very pattern of one he had given her shortly after their marriage. There might, indeed, have been many shawls of the same pattern and colour, but this proof, together with many other corroborative circumstances, left no doubt on the minds of John or Eliza, and he clasped Angel to his heart in a fatherly embrace.

"I shall never forget the poor girl's look of happiness as she ran to meet me the following day, exclaiming, 'Oh, Miss Mary, he is my father!'

"Who?" I said.

"Uncle John," she replied; "come in and mother will tell you."

"And so I did, and heard it all at full length."

"Thank you, Mary, for your story," said Charles and Emily; "I am sure we shall never forget the name of Angelica."

"And I hope," said Mary, "you will also remember how God, in his providence, sent the little Angel to comfort poor Eliza in her loneliness, and so beautifully arranged that every circumstance should happen so as to bring about the accomplishment of the dying mother's wishes and prayers." R.

THE CHILD TO THE OWL.

NOW as grave as a judge the old owl steps out
From his ivy-grown nook, on yon dank,
crumbling wall,
And just as the bat begins flitting about,
And the soft pleasant twilight in silence
to fall,
He awakes with quaint echoes the untrdden hall
That aye answers again and again to his call.
"Tu-whoo, tu-whit, tu-whoo."

The whole of the day he hath slumbered away,
While the brisk little fieldmouse made sport at
his feet;
While men were a-working and children at play,
He all motionless perched in his gloomy retreat.
Now he openeth his eyes, and his wings doth beat,
And the down-stooping night with a welcome greet.
"Tu-whoo, tu-whit, tu-whoo."

Oh, owl! I am sorry you do not partake
Those rare charms and delights that the day only
brings.
Why slumber you thus, while all else are awake—
When the bright flowers open, the lark spreads her
wings,
And the sweet-seeking bee all so merrily sings,
And the fields are alive with such beautiful things?
"Tu-whoo, tu-whit, tu-whoo."

And yet, I dare say, you strange birds of the night
Find pleasure and pastime while little boys sleep;
And our Father, who made the sweet lark love the
light,
Had his reasons for giving you vigils to keep;
And it's proper, when day is beginning to peep,
That away to your deep shady haunts you should
sweep. JOHN G. WATTS.